

*The Religious, Moral, and Civil State of the
Nation considered,*

I N A

S E R M O N

Preached in the

PARISH CHURCH

O F

St. LEONARD, *Shoreditch,*

Upon *January 9, 1744.*

Being the Day appointed for a *General FAST*,
in order to obtain of *Almighty GOD* Pardon for
our Sins: and to implore his Blessing and Assistance
on His Majesty's Arms in the present *War*.

By *JOHN DENNE, D. D.*

VICAR of the said Parish, and ARCHDEACON of
Rochester.

Published at the Request of the Parishioners.

L O N D O N :

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1744.

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TO THE
INHABITANTS
OF
St. LEONARD, *Shoreditch.*

THOUGH I have already printed two Sermons upon the like solemn Occasions as the present, which I preached at my other Parish: And though what I have said therein may be looked upon as a sufficient Admonition or Instruction to you in your Duty from Him, who has nothing more at Heart, than your temporal as well as spiritual Welfare; yet I cannot resist the affectionate Importunity, wherewith you pressed me to put this Discourse into your Hands, that you might read at Leisure, and with Deliberation, what you heard with Satisfaction from the Pulpit; though as I fear too many of you but imperfectly, considering the Largeness both of our Church and Congregation.

If therefore, upon such reading, the Number of good Christians, Protestants, and Englishmen, shall be encreased or strengthened among you; my chief End in publishing what was never intended for the Press, will be fully answered: Nor shall I regard what the Censorious may say of it.-----
However, without this Reason and View, I should hold myself inexcusable, were I not to oblige you in any Request,
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which my Relation to you makes it even reasonable for me to grant : And the more so, were I to slip so fair an Opportunity of giving you this public Testimony of my Gratitude for that Harmony and good Understanding, which has always subsisted between us, notwithstanding the Heats and Contests of Parties ; as well as for those many friendly Civilities I have received from you in the Course of One and Twenty Years and upwards of my Ministry, wherein you have kindly over-looked all personal Failings in my sincere Endeavours to approve myself in all Things,

Your most Affectionate Minister,

Faithful Friend, and

Obliged humble Servant,

JOHN DENNE.

ISAIAH lviii. 3. Part of the Verse.

*Wherefore have we Fasted, say they, and Thou seest not ?
Wherefore have we afflicted our Soul, and Thou takest
no Knowledge ?*

AS I find nothing in the History of the *Jewish* Nation remarkably parallel, or applicable to our *own*, at that particular juncture of Time, when the Prophet *Isaiah* deliver'd this Part of his *divine* Message to them, which has been chosen by those, who have Authority herein, for the first Lesson of our Morning-Service on this Solemn Day ; so I shall pass it quite over, remarking only, that the Subject-Matter of it in general may, in their Judgment, suggest unto us most devout, serious and suitable Meditations.

To this Purpose therefore I shall apply the Words of my Text ; which may indeed be consider'd, as an *Objection* in the Mouths of *prophane* and *ungodly* Men, against the Duty of *Fasting* and *Praying* at all ; but, as I hope, all in this Assembly are, (at least in the speculative Principles of their Minds) *religiously* dispos'd, I shall look upon them, as an *expostulatory* Complaint to GOD himself, or to his *Prophets*, which such Persons are tempted (as was the holy *Psalmist* himself, *Psalms* lxxiii.) to make, in a Time of War, and Distress ; if they find themselves disappointed of that Assistance and Success, which they feel they want, and think they have all the reason in the World to expect from the GOD of their Hope and Trust : and the more so, when they sue for them in *Weeping*, *Fasting*, and *Praying* ; in the very manner he himself commands to the most *humble* Supplicants and *contrite* Penitents ; who are, I say, under the Agonies of such a Disappointment, often tempted to cry out in the Spirit and Language of Unbelievers, *Wherefore have We fasted, and thou seest not ? Wherefore have We afflicted our Soul, and thou takest no Knowledge ?*

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Many among the People of this Land may, I fear, have reason'd and expostulated in Terms no less unjustifiable, and provoking, than what GOD resents from the *Jews* in the Verses following my Text. — For Instance, “ Have they not said in their Conversation, “ as well as in their Hearts; To what purpose have we been *Fast-ing* and *Praying*, for Years together, without one *Thanksgiving*, “ in a *War*, which was begun, is still carried on, and may at “ any Time be ended (and GOD forbid it should be sooner) upon “ Motives, that are not not only Wise and Righteous, but absolute- “ ly necessary to the Public Weal? — In a *War*, wherein our “ *Prince* at first engaged, not by Choice, but by constraint; not “ as did his *Enemies*, for the separate Interest, and private Glory “ of their Crowns and Families, but in Defence of the Rights, “ the Liberties, and Commerce of his Subjects; not so much to “ *Resent* the Indignities and Affronts offered to Himself, as the “ injurious, and cruel Wrongs they suffered. — In a *War*, that has “ been since prosecuted, not with ambitious Views to extend his “ own Dominions, but with a godlike, and benevolent Intention “ to *do Right*: and to restrain at least, if not *punish* the Wrong- “ doers. — In a *War*, that avows and aims at nothing but to “ *sheath* the *Sword*, whenever Providence shall put it into his Power “ to make a safe, a just, an honourable, and a lasting *PEACE*, “ not less for the Welfare of all *Europe*, than of this *Nation*, — “ And what true *Englishman* can aim at less? — Has not, say they, “ such a *War* as this, the most promising and clear Title to a “ prosperous Issue in the reason of Things, as well as from the “ Justice and Goodness of that *supreme* Being, who *over-ruleth* and “ *judgeth* in all the *Kingdoms* of *Men*? Why then have our Succes- “ ses hitherto fallen so exceeding short, not only of our sanguine “ Hopes, and self-interested Wishes; but even of common Right, “ and universal Good?”

In these *Expostulations*, or *Objections*, you have a *modern* Para- phrase upon an *old* Complaint among *Jews*, and *Gentiles*, against GOD, and the Administrations of his Providence; to which it is my present Design to give an Answer, (not by applying to each *particular* of it in strict Form) but such a one in *general*, as may convince and satisfy a reasonable and religious Mind, that GOD is *Righteous* in all his *Dealings* with us: and *Just* in all the *Judgments* he has brought upon us, notwithstanding any Claim to better Events

Events from repeated and afflicting *Fasts*, from humble and fervent *Prayers*, or from the Merits of our Cause, since they may be over-balanced in the Scale of divine Justice itself, by the Iniquities of those who espouse it. — Now such an Answer, I doubt not, every one will find, who will but take with me an impartial, and full Review of the *Religious, Moral and Civil* State of this Nation, both before, and since the War began.

1. First then, as to the *Religious* State of it. — Now, supposing what almost all *Infidels* allow, that no Kind of Government can ever have any true, and lasting Foundation, but in *Religion*; for which reason they imagine it to be the mere Invention and Artifice of the ablest Politicians, to keep the ignorant and profligate Part of their Species in Subjection, by the *Dread* of Invisible Power; of which they believe nothing themselves, scarce so much as there is a GOD. — Hence it is, that in Times, and Countries very *bad*, a Man would have been condemned, not as a *Fool*, but as a *Traytor* to human Society, who should have *openly* attacked all *Religion*. — And yet, have we not lived to see public Attempts of various *Kinds*, to dispute, as well as ridicule it out of the World? — Is it not become even fashionable to throw off the very *Appearances*, together with the *Forms* of *Godliness*, looking upon it as a Mark of a *wrong* Judgment, of a *weak* Mind, or a *superstitious* Imagination? Does it not pass, with most Malefactors, for true Gallantry and Courage, even at the Place of Execution, (where Civil Powers, can do no more than to *kill the Body*) to appear above the Apprehensions of any higher Power, or a future Judgment: and to leave this World, as if they had no Souls; and as if nothing were to be hop'd, or fear'd hereafter, but that *Men* were to *dye*, like the *Beasts*, that *perish*?

But granting their Numbers to be fewer, than they seem to be, who in their Writings, their Conversation, or their Hearts, discard all Belief of a Deity, of his *over-ruling* Providence, or of his bringing them, as a *Judge of all the Earth*, to an Account for their Thoughts, Words, and Deeds in this Life of Trial and Probation; which must, if any, be the Doctrines even of that *Natural* Religion, which is often pretended to, but oftner used as a *Cloke of Maliciousness* to *revel*. — Granting this, I say, yet with how much Neglect, or rather Contempt, is the *Gospel* of the *Son of GOD* treated; notwithstanding it be (abstractedly

edly considered) the best and wisest Religion in the World, and the most conducive to the perfection and happiness of human Nature, notwithstanding its main Design was to re-publish, and reinforce all the great Truths and Obligations of *Natural Religion*; notwithstanding the *great* Salvation it offers; notwithstanding it comes confirmed to Us, both with Signs and Wonders, and with divers Miracles, nay, with all possible demonstrations of a *divine* Spirit and Power. — Now, notwithstanding all these Considerations, with what Contempt is this *Gospel treated*, by what we still call the *Christian World*; though to speak according to the Truth of Things, it differs little in Principle and Practice from the *Heathen*, unless that *Romish Superstition*, and Protestant *Liberty* ~~too~~ make often worse Philosophers, and more *immoral Men*.

As to ourselves, let me ask the Question, which GOD puts by his Prophet *Jeremiah* to the *Jews*, (Chap. ii. 11.) *Hath a Nation changed their GODS, which are yet no GODS? but my People have changed their Glory, for that which doth not profit.* — Be astonished, O ye Heavens at this, and be ye horribly afraid. — And yet is it not in fact notorious, either that no People believe less of the Religion they profess than we do: Or that in no Age, nor Country, has the Religion Men profess been so openly set at naught? even to far as that, what we confess with our Lips to be the *Revelations*, nay, the Words of GOD himself are now become the most common Topics of *prophane* or *foolish* Jestings. — The Attacks that were at first made upon the divine Doctrines, the saving Truths, and the wise Ordinances of *Christianity* under the Cover, and the Colours of Reason, Criticism, and Free-thinking, and were then repulsed with Argument, Learning, Candor and Charity, have been since renewed, and push'd with Insolence, Ribaldry, and Malice, by every Libertine, or idle Writer, whose Pen is a Slave to his Lusts or his Belly; even so far, as to *blaspheme that worthy Name by the which we are called*: (James ii. 7.) and the Spirit by which we are *Sanctified*.

It will be said perhaps, that the Weight such Writers have, is but little: or, that they are of so prostitute a Character, that from what they talk or write, no harm will follow, but to themselves. — It would, I believe be so, were they not countenanc'd and caress'd by Persons of Rank and Fortune, of Figure and Genius, nay, in Authority; who, if not of the same Faith and Principles, are nevertheless

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nevertheless so far from living as *becometh the Gospel of Christ*, or even the Religion of Reason and Nature, that they have their Conversation in the *World*, without any visible Regard to the Providence, the Worship, the Service, and the Glory of its great *Creator and Governor*. — Nay, what is worse: and what they would, (were they wise unto their temporal, if not eternal Interest) consider; their Practices, to say nothing of their Opinions, spread like their Fashions, or rather like a Contagion, among all below them; so that their Dependents and their Servants, together with the Common People, begin to think as lightly, and to grow not less ashamed of Religion, than their *Superiors*. — And yet, what have these *Superiors* not to dread? whilst attended and surrounded by a *Multitude*, who act upon no Principles; but whose *Heart* (from the *Corruption that is in the World through Lust*) is fully set in them to do *Evil*; by a *Multitude* of weaker Reason, and like Passions and Appetites as themselves; who have the same natural Desires and Claims to do what they list or lust: and are resolved to gratify them at all Events. — By a *Multitude* who act upon no Principle, but that of preferring a *short* Life, spent in the *Pleasures of Sin*, to one of *Wisdom and Vertue*, with *Length of Days*, and *Hopes* full of *Immortality*; who desperately brave *Death*, as thinking, there is nothing in or beyond it: and who will consequently make their own *Strength* the *Law of Justice*, (*Wisd. ii. 11.*) Saying, *Who is Lord over Us?* when once they come to have neither a *Fear* nor *Love* of GOD, so as neither to dread his *Anger*, nor to do *Whatsoever they are to do* heartily, *as unto Him, and not unto Men, that of Him they may receive their Reward.* (*Col. iii. 23, 24.*)

These are the only sure and effectual Springs of right and good Actions in human Life. — But alas! where is, not to say the *Love*, but even the *Fear* of GOD to be found among us? — Shall we not pronounce it to be quite gone and lost, if we credit the many Accounts of Perjury, Subornation, and Unfaithfulness, that are Recorded in our Courts? Or if we stop not our Ears, against those Oaths, Curses, and Blasphemies, which are to be heard in every Corner of our Streets? and not less so, in our *Fleets* and *Armies*, where one would imagine, that *Death* and *Judgment* should always be, if not in *View*, yet so much at least in *Thought*, as to keep Men back from Sins, the most presumptuous and pro-

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voking to the *Divine* Majesty; and from verifying what is observ'd Abroad, "That no Race of Mortals hath so little Sense of Religion, as the *English* Soldiers and Sailors."

However, to say no more of Persons, who seem not to like to retain GOD in their *Knowledge*, (*Rom. i. 28.*) and to be given over by him to a *reprobate* Mind; Is there even among the most thinking and serious of us, that real and *practical* Belief, Reverence, and Trust, which are in the Reason of Things due to his all-wise and *over-ruling* Providence?—Has it not, for Instance, in the present War, been almost a National Foible (not but it deserves a *harder* Name) to talk of little else but our own Schemes, Strength, and Courage, as if we made *Flesh* our *Arm*: and put the whole of our *Confidence* in our *Fleets* and *Hosts*, without any Regard to the *divine* Blessing or Assistance?—But has not GOD, in exprefs Terms, pronounced his *Curse* on all who do so? (*Jer. xvii. 5.*)—Nay, is it not on this Account both wise and just in him to *punish* us (even as we have seen) with very *mortifying* Convictions of this Truth, that *vain* is all our *Confidence* in them, without his *Favour* and his *Help*; who is the only *Giver* of all *Victory*, and whom the Winds and Seas, with all Powers in Heaven and Earth, *obey*? To *punish* us indeed so long, till we have not only learnt this *Truth*, but likewise that we ought after such *mortifying* Convictions, to *ascribe* it wholly to his *Goodness*, with that of our Cause, that *he hath not made a full End of us, by shutting up his Loving-Kindness in Displeasure.*—BLESSED therefore be his *Name*, who in the midst of *Judgment* hath remembered *Mercy*; nay, hath not *forgotten* to be *gracious*, inasmuch as he has been pleased to defeat (in a Manner so *marvellous*, as shews it to the *Eyes of Sense*, to be his *Doing*) an Invasion, which must for certain have brought that forest Plague of all, a *War* into our own Country; which might, in all human Probability, have laid desolate its Capital, have cut the Sinews of its naval Strength, have ruined its Credit and its Trade, and struck at once and unawares so fatal a Blow, as might have reduced this Kingdom (for an Age at least) into a *conquered* Province, under the Tyranny of an *absolute* Monarch and his People; who always have been, and must be, in the Nature of Things, our irreconcilable Rivals and Foes, in whatever can regard the *true* Interests and Glory of this Island.
—Inasmuch as besides this, all our other *Successes* ought in
Truth.

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Truth and Justice, to be ascribed, not unto *Us*, but unto GOD, as carrying visible Marks of his interposing Hand; *Successes* which though not equal to our *presumptuous* Hopes and *Wishes*, or to our *real* Wants, have nevertheless in Fact gone far beyond what we *deserved*, or our Enemies *feared*; whose Disappointments have been *such*, as still to leave them in fear of every thing that can be feared from *Men*, if divine Providence be but henceforth with us, as in *old Times*, nay, within our own Memory.

What ought we not then, my *Brethren*, to do, or not to leave undone, to regain and secure GOD to be on *our Side*? —And yet, Woe be unto us, does there not still continue among the best of us, an evident Lukewarmness, and, as I fear, Decay in that true Religion, rational Piety, and Christian Zeal, for his Honour and Service, which were in the Days of our Forefathers, (as Archbishop Tillotson observes) “almost the natural “Temper of the *English*”, as well as the Strength of our Salvation, and the Glory of our Land?—Are not these indeed in imminent Danger of being lost by our *not assembling ourselves together* for religious Offices, (as is the *manner* of too many, High and Low, Rich and Poor) if not by a prophane Contempt of his Word and Ordinances, so as to spend his Sabbaths, (*Isaiab lvi. 13.*) *in doing our own Ways, in finding our own Pleasure, and in speaking our own Words*, instead of *taking a Delight* in his Presence, and *coming into his Courts*, there to *give*, in the great Congregations of his People, the Praise and Honour due unto his Name; to *Worship* him in Spirit and in Truth: and to improve our own Minds in the truest Wisdom, by being first *Hearers*, and then *Doers* of his Word? Are we not in these Respects even worse than the hypocritical Jews, of whom *Isaiab* gives this Character (*ver. 2.*) *That they sought GOD daily, and delighted to know his Ways, as a Nation that did Righteousness, and forsook not his Ordinances, but delighted in approaching him?*—But farther, Do we not deceive ourselves, even though we should on such solemn Occasions as these, *afflict our Souls, bow down our Heads as Bulrushes, and spread Sackcloth and Ashes under us*; if so be we should at the same Time *fast for Strife and Debate, to make our Voice to be heard on*

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high: and thus add Hypocrisy to our open Sins. — These are the very Crimes for which GOD reproves the *Jews*, in the Chapter of my Text, (*ver. 4, 5.*)

But judge ye yourselves what is right, and a proper Answer to a wise Question of the Son of *Sirach* (*Ecclus. xxxiv. 6.*) *If a Man fasteth for his Sins, and goeth again and doth the same, who will bear his Prayer, and what will his Humbling profit him?* To what Purpose is all the external Pageantry of Fasting, Sorrow, and Humiliation? — It will *profit* nothing more in the Judgment of your own Consciences, as well as of Prophets and Apostles, than all other *Forms of Godliness*, (though commanded as good, as acceptable, and as necessary in their Kind) without that *Power*, which will determine us, according to the divine Exhortations in *Isaiah*, (*ver. 6, &c.*) *to loose the Bands of Wickedness, to learn to do well, to deal our Bread to the Hungry, to set the Oppressed free, to satisfy the afflicted Soul, and to delight ourselves in GOD; for then our Light shall rise in Obscurity, it shall break forth as in the Morning, and our Darknes shall be as the Noon-day.* — Then shall we call, and the Lord shall answer; we shall cry, and he shall say, *here I am.* — He will guide us continually, and his Glory shall be our Reward, to defend us from our Enemies, to keep us safe from those who lie in wait, to give us Victory in the Day of Battle, to cause us to ride upon the high Places of the Earth: and to convince us, that *Godliness is stronger than All*, (*Wisd. x. 12.*) — There is indeed no other possible Way either to recover his Favour, or avert his Anger. — It must, therefore, be of the last Consequence unto us, to revive that evangelical, true, and substantial Piety (free from the Extremes both of Superstition and Enthusiasm) which teaches Men to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World. — For that we have it not, will be plain from enquiring,

II. Secondly, into the *Moral State* of our Country; though without enquiring, we may be sure, that it neither is, nor can be better, than the *Religious*. For so closely are they join'd together in the Reason and Constitution of Things, that the Over-flowing of all the Streams of Vice, must be as natural a Consequence of *Irreligion*, as that a Naught and poison'd Fountain should send

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send forth *bitter* and baneful Waters. — When *Religion* decays, *Morals* must. And it is not so in Fact with us? — *Does not our Land* mourn *because of Swearing falsely*? (Jer. xxiii. 10.) Is it not filled with all *Unrighteousness* by the contemning or slighting of *Oaths*, though the best Security human Wisdom can devise for our Properties, Liberties, and even Lives? Have not Fraud and Cozenage, Extortion and Oppression, public and private Gaming, Bribery and Corruption of every Sort, the having false Weights and Measures, nay, the Exercising all the Mysteries of Iniquity and Deceit in most of our Dealings and Commodities? — Have not these, I say, brought us into Danger of losing all our Trade Abroad, even without a *War*, whilst the fair Trader could scarce live at Home? Have not these been the known and applauded Means of *getting Wealth*? And has that Wealth when gotten, administer'd to any Thing, in City, Court, or Country, but to a *Forgetfulness* of GOD, to *Revellings* and *Banquettings*, to *Lasciviousness*, to an idle and generally a profuse Way of Living, to *Pleasures* and *Diversions* only: or to *Strife* and *Envying*? 'till by the secret *Curse* of GOD, or our wicked *Abuse* of his Blessings, Poverty and Weakness were stealing in upon us, even in the midst of Peace and Plenty, and in the height of Glory. — Not but that there is too much reason to think that many of our Complaints about *Governors* and *Taxes*, as well as about numerous *Bankruptcies*, and an universal *Decay* of *Trade*, may proceed from hence, that having discarded the *Virtues* and *Frugality* of our Ancestors (which raised this Nation to what it has been) there comes not in enough *now* to feed our *Luxury*, to gratify our *Pleasures*, or to keep up our *Pride*: or even to answer such *Necessities* as arise from our own Follies and Vices. — Nor is this all, for, what is *Worse*? have not the *Working* Part of our Nation (I may say, the *Strength* of it, both in *Peace* and *War*) been tempted by an habitual Use of *Spirituous Liquors*, to turn what GOD designed to be the Staff of Life, into its surest, however slow *Poison*? till the *Joints* of their *Loyns* are *loosen'd*, and their *Knees* smite one against another, so that they find neither Will nor Power to Labour: Nor indeed any Courage left, unless to execute (after *waxing Valiant* by intoxicating and inflaming Draughts, the most

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Flagrant Villanies, with such *Barbarity*, in maiming, or murdering, as are unknown in *English* Story, and beyond Expression, shocking to *English* Minds. — In one Word, are not the People of this *Land*, like the People of *Israel*, in the Days of *Ezekiel* and *Isaiab*, not only *abominably wicked*, but even so *Impudent*, and *hard-hearted*, as not to conceal, or palliate their Vices; they *declare* their *Sins* as *Sodom*, they *hide* them not, but *glory* in their *Shame*, being so bad in *Head* and *Heart*, that their Practices scarce contradict their Principles and Consciences. (*Ezek. iii. 9. Isaiab iii. 9.*)

Now since it appears from *Universal History*, that the *Rise* and *Fall* of Nations, has always kept pace with the Prevalency of *Virtue* and *Vice* among them; Since an Universal Degeneracy of Manners, with a Contempt, or even Neglect of what is *religious*, or *good*, in Theory and Practice carries in it (without the Application of proper and timely Remedies) as *sure* Presages of Dissolution to the *Body Politic*, as any the most *fatal* Symptoms can of Death to the *Body natural*, no less so, than when (to speak in the Language of our Prophet, *Isaiab i. 5, 6.*) *the whole Head is sick, and the whole Heart faint, and there is no Soundness in it, but Wounds, and Bruises, and putrifying Sores.* — Since these Things are so in Fact, what have we not to fear in the natural and ordinary Course of Causes and Effects? even though GOD should not visit for these Things, and be avenged on such a *Nation* as this, (*Jer. v. 29.*) by any of what *Ezekiel* styles (*Chap. xiv. 21.*) his *four sore Judgments, the Pestilence, the noisome Beast, the Famine, and the Sword.* — His *Sword*, alas! he has drawn and whetted in the Hands of all our Enemies around us. — Our Land therefore ought to *tremble*, and every one that *dwelleth* therein to *mourn*, for fear he should give it the *keenest* Edge, with full Liberty and Strength to *cut us off* from *being a People.* — At least, for fear of our seeing verified in a *foreign War*, what a Noble Historian * remark'd upon a *Civil*, about a Century ago, that, “though the immediate Finger and Wrath of GOD must be “acknowledged in those Perplexities and Distractions,” (which first kindled, and then blew it up) “yet He who shall diligently observe the Distempers and Conjunctures of Time, the

* Lord Clarendon. Book I. *The Preface.*

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“ Ambition, Pride, and Folly of Persons, and the sudden
“ Growth of Wickedness from want of *Care* and *Circumspection*
“ in the *first* Impressions, will find all those Miseries to have
“ proceeded, and to have been brought upon us, from the same
“ natural Causes and Means, which have usually attended King-
“ doms swoln with long Plenty, Pride, and Excess towards some
“ signal Mortification and Castigation of Heaven.”

Let us then, my *Brethren*, not fail in this *Care* and *Circumspection*, but look about, and narrowly observe, whether there are not in the *present* Generation, just the same baneful Fruits of Plenty, Pride, and Excess, from a long Enjoyment of the Blessings of Peace : and let us thereupon form the sincerest and strongest Resolutions to revive all those Virtues, private as well as public, which were heretofore the *Stability* of the Times, and then made our *Jerusalem* a *Praise* in the *Earth*. Let us live soberly, frugally, and virtuously. — Let us, at least every one, *cure the Plague of his own Heart*, (1 *Kings* viii. 8.) and amend the *Evil*, both of his Principles and Actions, in order to *heal* and *sanctify* the Whole, as being the best *natural* as well as *religious* Means within our Power not only to lighten the Burden of the present War, and to bring it to a good and speedy Conclusion ; but to dispose us likewise to follow all such Lessons of Prudence in our *Civil* Conduct, as tend to a *lasting* Establishment of our Interests, Peace, and Happiness, both at Home and Abroad. Which is to be the

III. *Third* and *last* Head of this Discourse. — But having left myself little Time for this, I shall soon finish what I have to say upon a Subject, that may seem to lye somewhat out of my Province, as a *Minister* of the *Gospel*, though not without an Application, that will have no less of *Morality* and *Christianity* in it, than of true *Politics*. Since then it is the *Moral* and *Christian*, as well as *Legal* Duty of every Soul to be *Subject* to the *Higher Powers* of his Country, as to the *Ordinance* of GOD, and of every such *Subject* to obey them that *have rule over him, to be quiet, and to do his own Business*, (1 *Thess.* iv. 11.) not intruding, as *Busy-bodies*, into such Things as are not only out of our Province, but beyond the Reach of our Knowledge and Abilities ;

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Abilities: and since *we* of this *Kingdom*, enjoy (what most Nations have lost) the invaluable Privilege of chusing, whom we will, to judge and act for us in the *great Council* of our *Land*, as assembled in *Parliament*, let us *choose* the honestest and wisest *Representatives* we can, and the best qualified for *Statesmen* and *Politicians*; but when chosen, let us leave it to them (unless in Cases of plain and extreme Necessity) to take and to pursue in concert with the KING, and those who are in *Authority* under him, such Measures (whereof they have the truest means to judge) as shall seem to them most conducive to the *general good* of the Community, or to a *successful Management* of the *War*. — It is, I own, a commendable Zeal in such our *Representatives*; a Zeal, that will, I hope, always keep them vigilant and active in the Cause of their *Sovereign*, their *Country*, and their *Religion*, so as to oppose: nay, censure, if need be, every Counsel, or Transaction, that may in the natural Consequence of Things end in the Ruin, or detriment of either *King* or *People*, of either *Church* or *State*. — But then, let even them beware, *not only for Wrath, but Conscience Sake*, (*Rom. xiv. 5.*) how they get into *Cabals* with, and unite their Honour unto such Men, as are either pleased or displeased, just as their Humours, or their Vices are gratified, or disoblged. — Let them also take heed unto themselves, that neither Avarice nor Ambition, with *private* Resentments, and *personal* Immoralities do ever enter into the Schemes, Votes and Actions of *true and honest PATRIOTS* (to say nothing of the *Traiterous*, the *Factionous*, and the *Desperate*) to corrupt, bribe or tempt them to use, as being *free*, their *Liberty* for a *Cloke of Maliciousness*, but as the *Servants* of GOD, (*1 Pet. ii. 16.*) as aiming at, and pursuing nothing, but that *public Good*, both at Home and Abroad, which *changes* not with any *Ministry*: nor *cools* in its Zeal, by any Disappointments in Self-interested Expectations from Places of Profit, Power or Honour. — Let them, in Spite of such Disappointments at Court, however disoblging or provoking, be ever ready to concur most heartily, and chearfully with any *Ministry*, in every Measure, that may tend to the common Safety, or Interest of their *Country*. — Let them learn from the *Historian* already mentioned, and from what happened in his Days, by way of
Judgment,

Judgment on our Forefathers, and in the Courfe of Providence for our *Admonition*, that “ The Pride of *this* Man, and the “ Popularity of *that*, the Levity of one, and the Morofity of “ another; the Spirit of Craft and Subtility in fome, and the “ unpolish’d Integrity of Others, did all contribute *jointly* (along “ with personal Paflions, and Refentments) to that Mafs of “ Confufion,” which swallow’d up the beft Conftitution both in Church and State. — For after fuch *Lessons* learnt and laid to heart, they will, without any Cautions from the Word of GOD, or his Prophets, be never wanting in *Honour* to the Perfon, nor in a *dutiful* Obedience to the *Authority* of their *Sovereign*. — They will, even in their warmeft Struggles for public Good, be confcientioufly *cautious* (if they truly love their Country) how they obftruct or diftrefs him in any of his Defigns for it; how they give Credit to groundlefs Surmifes, or dangerous Infinuations; how they utter downright *Falsehoods*, or mifrepresent *Truths*: or even how they aggravate any real Mistakes or Mifcarriages, by the low and bafe Arts of Defamation, Scandal and Detraction, or by the *keenest* Strokes of Wit, exerted in Satyr, and Invective againft fuch Plans of Adminiftration, either in *Peace* or *War*; where in the moft able, and honeft *Politicians* may fail; nay, wherein they themfelves are *given* to change. For a *Speaking Evil of Dignities*, a *Contempt* or *Jealoufy* of *Governors* and *Government*, or a Delight to find, or make *Faults* in every Thing they do; as alfo in what *Providence*, or other *independent States* will not let them *do*, will infenfibly carry even well-meaning Perfons (who have not an *uncommon* Share, both of *discerning* and *forefeeing* Wifdom) into thofe Parties, Factions, Diffentions, or at leaft Difcontents; which may, like the *Letting out of Waters*, (in defiance of all our Inclinations and Endeavours afterwards) deftroy our Country, either by a *Deluge* of its *own*: or by leaving it open thro’ weaken’d Mounds, to a *Flood* of *foreign* Enemies. — Should not likewise *They* more efpecially who have both Commiffion and Power, whether by Sea or Land, beware of fuch-like personal Vices, Jealoufies, Piques, or Paflions, as have been branded by our Noble and Wife Historian? and which have neverthelefs, I fear, had the fame curfed Effects in defeating fome of our moft hopeful Enterprifes

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in this War : and above all, in that one Engagement, which might (so far as human Views can reach) have put an *End* to it by ruining at once the *combined* naval Force of our Enemies ; even as we ourselves expected, though with too *arrogant*, if not *irreligious* a Confidence in our own *Self-Sufficiency*.

Should not (to conclude) these *Lessons* and *Admonitions*, nay, *divine Judgments*, determine one and all of us, from the highest to the lowest, as good *Christians*, *Subjects*, or *Politicians*, to put away (as an Apostle commands *Ephes. iv. 32.*) all *Bitterness*, and *Wrath*, and *Anger*, and *Clamour*, and *Evil-Speaking*, with all *Malice* ? that we may (if we can agree in nothing else) join *Hands* and *Hearts*, amidst the most violent *Contests* of *Parties*, in acting like a *People* at *Unity* with itself, against *Enemies*, who devise nothing less, than to *down with us*, *down with us*, *even to the Ground* ; whose chief Policy and Strength to compass that End, is now, and always has been, as well by their public *Ministers*, as by their secret *Emissaries* or corrupted *Agents*, both *here* and *every where*, to *divide us* ; well knowing, that if we will go on to *bite and devour one another*, *we shall be consumed one of another*, (*Gal. v. 15.*) and be forced, if not betrayed, into a worse *Peace*, than what finished the last *War* : and which has been ever since looked upon as the principal Source of our foreign Calamities.

Let us therefore not only *afflict our Souls in Fasting*, or *pray without ceasing* for *Victory* and *Peace* to our *Jerusalem*, but follow, with Integrity and Unanimity, the *Things that belong to both*, before they are hid from our *Eyes* ; seeking at the same Time to do her all the Good we can, in our several Stations and Callings, as the surest Proof of our *Love* unto her, as well as of that *fervent Charity among ourselves*, that was recommended above all things by *St. Peter* (*1 Pet. iv. 8.*) to his own Countrymen in like Circumstances ; which (as it breathes the most forbearing and forgiving, the most reconciling and healing Spirit) will not only prevent that *Ruin*, which must, in the Course of *Nature* as well as *Providence*, ensue from *Hatred*, *Variance*, *Wrath*, *Strife*, *Seditions* ; but may also dispose *GOD* himself to *cover a Multitude of Sins*, so as to *turn away his Wrath*, and not suffer his whole *Displeasure* to arise in national *Judgments*, till he have utterly consumed us, or removed our *Candlestick* out of its Place.

However,

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However, till we become thus *Religious, Good, and Wise*, let us still *persevere* to entreat with GOD in the Faith of *Abraham*, nothing *wavering* (*James* i. 6.) (as he did for *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*) *Gen.* xviii. 32. Not to be *angry* with us, but to *receive* our Prayer when we supplicate him for the sake of his *own* Glory, the *Gospel* of his *Son*, and the true and lasting Welfare of our Native Country (in Opposition to *French* Tyranny, and *Popish* Superstition) to *turn* from this Church and Kingdom, all those *Evils* that we have most righteously deserv'd. — Unto His gracious *Mercy* and *Protection* therefore let us *commit* ourselves. And may He *keep, defend, assist, unite, and Bless* us. May He *lift up* the *Light* of his *Countenance* upon us, and *give* us not only *Victory* in Battle, but *Peace*, both *now*, and for *evermore*, Amen.

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